The Commonweal

June 3, 1949

Sardinian Elections

Leo J. Wollemborg

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Labor Party Motives

J. L. Benvenisti

Did They Know It Was Loaded?

James Rorty

VOLUME L 15c NUMBER 8

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Next Week

THE CANADIAN ELECTION, by Margaret Wade. The first general election in four years in the Dominion of Canada takes place June 27. The campaign is now in full swing. It is a three-cornered struggle among the incumbent Liberals, the Progressive Conservatives and the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). The groups and ideas which each party represents, some of the colorful political leaders and the chief issues at stake.

THE TEN POINTS OF SEELISBERG, by John Cogley. The challenging program against anti-Semitism adopted in Switzerland by Catholic and Protestant representatives of the International Council of Christians and Jews. In presenting these ten points, John Cogley declares that "religion alone can make the final and effective appeal to conscience."

Also Francis Downing on the Ford Motor strike, reviews of books and films and interpretive comment on the news of the week.

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The
COMMONWEAL

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Foreign Trade and Point '4'

FIGURES for the first quarter of the year appear to indicate that unless foreign buyers wait around for European currency devaluations longer than is expected, US exports will reach the third highest total on record. Of the nearly fourteen billions in expected exports, purchases financed by the Marshall Plan will account for four or five billions. The contemplated ten percent export increase by volume over last year also reflects a shift from finished food products (not grains) to raw and semi-fabricated materials for industry and to construction, conveying, mining, well and pumping machinery. This reflects progression from relief to rehabilitation.

Imports into the United States should exceed seven billions, another record and an impressive one, since a number of US buyers are said to be holding off for the lower prices which devaluation would bring. Yet even without Marshall Plan financing the chronic gulf between our exports and imports persists.

In the long run this will mean that the foreign markets for our goods will shrink appreciably, particularly three years hence with the termination of the Marshall program. That is one reason for the increasing enthusiasm among American business men for Mr. Truman's Point 4, which calls for our participation in the economic development of the world's under-developed areas. It is an answer to the ceaseless quest for new markets (and sources of raw materials).

Estimable as is any effort to raise living standards among the most impoverished peoples, such a plan involves tremendous obstacles. Private capital would require extensive guarantees: a stable currency, freedom to take profits in cash out of the area, government protection of the investment and the like. In short, a new economic colonialism. While if the new projects were to be directly government-financed and government-operated, that would impinge too heavily on the national sovereignty of the under-developed region. If this exploitation were to focus on production of raw materials, it would be a losing game. For over any long period purchases of high-cost finished products cannot be balanced by sales of raw materials.

If, on the other hand, this development is to take the sounder form of industrialization primarily for domestic use, that will cut into the foreign market for certain US products. The hope would be that greater region-wide purchasing power through some industrialization would make possible the purchase of other US goods. With the increasing postwar competition, it seems unlikely that industrialization to provide manufactures for export could be a major aspect of such a scheme.

But if increase in international trade is to bolster our own and other economies, we must look more searchingly into our own import program. The US, with the lion's share of the world's gold, has enjoyed a "favorable" balance of trade for decades. In recent years our imports for the most part have consisted of tropical and other foodstuffs we cannot produce in sufficient quantity, strategic raw materials and semi-fabricated stuff for our industrial hopper. The lag in our imports can be explained by the failure to buy foreign manufactured goods.

The United States has the ingenuity and the know-how; no one has yet been able to compete in mass production or standardized low-price manufactures. It is unlikely that this country will ever provide much of a foreign market for such products. That leaves luxury items. Must we raise up in this country new legions of gourmets who are clad in delicate silks and satins and surrounded by foreign *objets d'art?* And are Americans also to sail the seven seas and swarm through the airways of the world—bringing their life-giving dollars—in truly unprecedented numbers to restore the economic balance?

What is more likely is that government response to various pressures will be continued subsidization of American exports, with little serious

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effort directly to prop imports up. Terrific US productivity without a feasible means of distributing the products themselves more widely among the generality of the domestic population seems to admit of no other answer, if any approximation of full steam and full employment is to be maintained. Eager foreign recipients will ever be at hand. Today it is Western Europe, and to a lesser extent Latin America; tomorrow Eastern Europe; in the future Africa and the Orient. And in all this, US producers will be meeting real if distant human needs.

Reconversion of the School Industry

ABOUT the last industry to reconvert since the war has been education. During this current year of 1949, the war-created Veterans Administration will pour into the business something like $2,888,107,000—a huge, but hugely risky supply of money for the teaching and learning trade. Other school programs add more than half a billion dollars to the federal funds pouring this year, by diverse and complex and quite unrelated channels, into a $3,400,000,000 school pool. The corresponding total in 1940 was around $100,000,000. That is expansion, indeed, which even the aircraft industry might respect.

These figures are presented by the Hoover Commission sub-report on federal activities in education and are summarized in the New York *Times*. The most immediate concern these sources register is over the duplication, waste, overlapping and general irrationality of federal handouts, which are made without coordination, bureau by bureau, by a practical infinity of government offices. Then, also, there is the problem of education.

The Government spends none of this money for purposes of general education. Except, in some large sense, for the special and presumably temporary allocations to veterans, and the $92,000,000 spent on school lunches, the federal agencies spend the money to buy something special which they want. The Atomic Energy Commission is dispensing $93,991,000 this year, the Military Establishment, $84,388,000; etc., etc. The schools and the students themselves, as persons, are secondary considerations in the expenditure of $500,000,000. But all that money bends and binds the schools and the aspiring students. It is a supremely disjointed, narrowly pragmatic, altogether insecure pattern of education which is in the process of absorbing the whole field. State schools from grammar schools to universities, and private schools from your kindergarten to Harvard, Yale and Princeton—or Georgetown, Fordham and Notre Dame—feel the pressures of inflation raising their costs, inflation ruining their fixed incomes, expansion lifting their budgets, and the agencies of government holding the money for purposes of predetermined job training or "research contracts." One need not love Latin and Greek excessively to hope that a means of reconversion will be found to turn our schools back to education before the post-war world is hard set.

The Vatican Through Russian Eyes

IN THE MIDST of the bitterest polemics, there is often an opening, a kind of trap, for the deepest pathos. For a moment, the sadness of the partisanship itself, which blinds the intelligence and closes the heart, can make the consuming argument all beside the point. While reading the *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, and thinking of the easy answers to its Russian communist sources, one may easily trip and be stopped in the midst of almost impenetrable sorrow. In the last issue, for example, there is a long, feature article from the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, called "The Vatican and Its Politics."

Everything, everything, everything is interpreted differently than we would interpret it. We would challenge statement after statement which is given as a fact, and almost everywhere where we would admit the fact, we would give a different meaning. We could, we are quite sure, prove flat logical contradictions within the article, and show that both the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church are placed in the text in entirely different positions than they occupy in life. We would feel very confident challenging the opposing author to "scores" in a party contest. But, when he turns his gaze and remarks "the brilliant and sumptuous Catholic rites . . . raising and touching the hearts of religious Catholics," and speaks of "the Russian vespers . . . close to every human soul," then the field of polemics abruptly goes dry.

And it is not "the Vatican" which the Soviet Orthodox author is in fact attacking; it is the whole body of Catholics throughout the world, whose representative as well as religious leader occupies Saint Peter's chair. When we have thrown up against us our own personal actions and words and thoughts toward the Communists, the Russians, and the members of the Orthodox Church, self-justification is not the right reaction, but *mea culpa*. One sees that the only possible witness to the truth, the only argument which could overcome the almost automatic partisanship of the "East" and the "West", would be a person—many persons, now—who should bear charity. In all this contest, how terribly little is done to reach the men who suffer the cold war! We know there are a few abbeys of Benedictines, a small company of the Society of Jesus, a few informal groups of Catholics and individuals who

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are all and fully devoted to meeting the "East" in active and sympathetic charity. Some who actually pray the new devotions of Our Lady of Fatima pray truly for Russia. It is inadequate. Up to now, the Christians of the West are inadequate for the contest which they can win in argument, and perhaps in warfare. The necessary victory is in motive and spirit—ours as well as theirs.

Paris Again

ALTHOUGH Czechoslovakia is not a subject of conversation at the Paris Foreign Ministers conference, the recent history of that country forms a rather significant background for the conference. Conditions there symbolize the larger German and European state of affairs and they indicate why the conference was called at all and what chance of success there is.

It was the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia in February, 1948, that brought to Western minds a familiar picture of bloodless aggression and spurred the West to take a stand behind European unity, ERP and the Atlantic Pact. That this has been a successful policy has been demonstrated by the Russian retreat in lifting the Berlin blockade on Western terms. As much as any country, Czechoslovakia had reason to rejoice over the revival of East-West trade. High prices, scarcity of goods and signs of popular dissatisfaction had the Czech economy and régime in a tight pinch, since that economy has traditionally relied on a large volume of trade with both East and West.

To relieve strains such as this on Russia's satellite economies, the blockade was lifted and a new mood, described officially as one of "conciliation," became the evident and studied Russian line.

Shortly before the Paris talks began, Archbishop Josef Beran of Prague wrote a circular letter to Czech Catholics stating that talks between the Communist government and the Church broke off "when it was discovered that the confidential privacy of the negotiations had been disrupted by recording devices placed in the conference room." The Archbishop protested government hostility, the closing of Catholic schools and seminaries and the censorship of religious books. Czechoslovakia is now the scene and symbol in Europe of Russia's policy of discrediting the Vatican and separating Catholics from Rome, in the continuing effort to dismember the unity and spirit of the Church in Europe.

It is, then, against this Czech background that the Paris conference is convened. Economically and politically, conciliation is the expedient, surface mood, while underneath, irreconcilable with this, the sinister intentions remain and are pressed home hard on the Czechs.

In this light, not much can realistically be expected from Paris. To the degree that tension is relaxed, or that trade increases, or that there is agreement on Germany, there is hope that the very force of circumstances will draw Russia and the West closer together on some levels at least.

The "force" of these circumstances, however, did not appear unsolicited. It resulted from a calculated policy which, however tense or cold, is preserving what free areas are left in the world. As yet, as events in Czechoslovakia show, there is still a spiritual aggression and there is no evidence that it will take anything more than a guarded conciliation on our part at Paris to meet the Russian "conciliation" half-way.

The Victor Reuther Shooting

THE second effort to murder a Reuther brother—which at this writing we can hope and pray was a second time unsuccessful—makes Detroit and the Detroit industrial world a very bad sign of bad times. Industrial relations and union organization are increasingly important parts of community life, and they are very complex, with currents and trends and "political" struggles for power. But they are not specialized fields, isolated from the general economic and social and political scene—from the whole life of the city. The city, the automobile industry and the UAW are hardly healthy when buckshot periodically interrupts their proceedings.

It is time to take a simpler view of violence. Excessive rationalization, over-intellectualized and under-oriented theorizing, together with the massive and obscure organization of a highly and scientifically synthesized way of life, tend to blind us to the crude, immediate acts that make things happen. The causes of these shootings may indeed go back via father and mother, school and books, Dreiser and Freud, Marx and Henry Ford, all the way to Adam and Eve, but the shots were actually fired by perfectly tangible men, with the readily comprehensible mechanism of a shotgun.

Where has a bad society grown up without this kind of crude, unintellectual, flatly illegal, easily understood violence? Those fascist, and those communist régimes could never have clamped down their power by the force of historical trends and economic analyses. They require very rough men with guns who simply rob and beat up and kidnap and kill without regard for any laws and courts, whether established ones or ones which even they would feel obligated to establish to live a life. What in the world were our ancestors working for if not a society where these attacks on the Reuthers would be an unheard of shame for everybody but bandits, and where a very quick and strict reform would speedily follow such an undisguised crime.

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As Sardinia Goes . . . ?

Extremists gain, Moderates lose ground in Italian regional election

Leo J. Wollemborg

THE RESULTS of the regional elections held on May 8 in the island of Sardinia appear to bear out most of the doubts expressed in my previous articles concerning the present Christian-Democratic leadership and emphasize some of the underlying dangers of the Italian situation.

First of all, it should be pointed out that the Sardinian elections had aroused unusual interest throughout the country and that the leaders of all major parties, from Premier De Gasperi to Communist chief Togliatti, had taken a hand in the pre-election campaign. A special effort was made by the monarchists, who were particularly eager to make a good showing in Sardinia, a traditional royalist stronghold. Former king Umberto sent a personal message to the Sardinians, calling upon them to vote for the National Monarchist Party (PNM). This royal accolade, so specifically bestowed upon one of the various monarchist groups, had a mixed reception even among the "faithful," many of whom have little love or respect for Signor Covelli, the leader of the PNM. On the eve of the elections, the rumor was even circulated among the Sardinian peasants that the former king was about to make a personal appearance on the island.

It was not surprising, therefore, that attendance at the polls should have been exceptionally large (85% of registered voters), though falling somewhat short of the record turnout that marked the general election of April 1948.

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In that election, the Christian-Democrats had polled about 310,000 votes, or 51.5% of the total number of ballots cast in Sardinia. This time, they received 193,000 votes or 34% of the total. They still emerged as the leading political group, but saw their strength cut by one third. This, in itself, would not be too surprising or too disturbing. After all, the oversized victory scored by the Christian-Democrats in 1948 was clearly the product of special circumstance: several millions of Italians had voted for Signor De Gasperi's party as for the only available alternative to communism. But—and this is the really ominous indication—those voters, whose allegiance the Christian-Democrats have failed to hold, are not turning to some moderate party; they are going over to the extreme, subversive outfits of both the Right and the Left.

★

ALONG with the monarchists, who jumped from 10,000 to 65,000 votes, the main gainers were the neo-fascists of the Movimento Sociale Italiano and the Communists

Together with their Socialist Left Wing comrades, the communists polled almost 150,000 votes or 26% of the total (against 21% in April 1948) and thus consolidated their position as the second strongest group in Italian political life. Proportionately even more impressive were the gains scored by the neo-fascists: they received more than three times as many votes as they did a year ago (36,000 to less than 12,000). The picture is completed by the extremely poor showing of the moderate parties, both of the Right and of the Left, which are represented, along with the Christian-Democrats, in the present Government. Signor Saragat's moderate Socialists received 2.9% of the votes, the Liberals got even less (2%).

It may be argued that the Sardinian returns do not necessarily offer an accurate picture of the Italian situation as a whole; or that, by themselves, they do not indicate a trend. True, but they still point to some significant shifts in Italian political opinion; or rather they spotlight once more some basic deficiencies and latent dangers, which had been obscured by the wave of relief and optimism that followed the communist defeat a year ago.

Italy still lacks a strongly democratic, truly progressive movement to lift and lead the people out of those material and moral conditions on which communism and fascism both thrive.

The present Christian-Democratic leadership has been able to restore and guarantee public order and freedom in the face of communist threats and pressure. However, by failing to take concrete action on the necessary social and economic reforms, it has failed to deprive the Communists of their most effective political weapon. Furthermore, the present leadership has been unable or unwilling to expose and counteract effectively the

(*Cont. on page* 192)

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Silver Jubilee 1949

Three months ago a group of friends of The Commonweal formed a 25th Anniversary Committee to obtain funds sufficient to place the magazine on a secure financial foundation. This Committee includes: Dorothy Day, Waldemar Gurian, Helen Iswolsky, Jerome G. Kerwin, Emmet Lavery, Jacques Maritain, Theodore Maynard, Thomas Merton, Mary Perkins, J. F. Powers, Henry Rago, Frank J. Sheed and Helen C. White.

Their interest in the magazine and their conviction that The Commonweal should continue publication and achieve its full stature persuaded them to appeal for a Silver Jubilee Fund of $50,000, to be contributed principally in $25 "fund-units."

Since their original appeal, the number of participants in the Anniversary campaign has grown to 575, who have donated more than one-third of the necessary 2,000 fund-units. The number of colleges and academies, convents and monasteries, bishops and priests participating in the Jubilee campaign demonstrates an extensive conviction that the magazine should carry on and become an increasingly important influence in American life.

The basic objective of the Silver Jubilee Committee, and the hundreds of readers who have contributed to the fund thus far, is the continuation and growth of the only general review expressing the point of view of American Catholic laymen on contemporary affairs—a point of view now identified and receiving national recognition.

This is a cooperative effort. Many more fund-units are needed to build adequately on a most promising start. (Checks should be made payable to The Commonweal Silver Jubilee Fund.) Fund-units subscribed in installments are as acceptable as gifts in one lump sum. The future of The Commonweal depends on your contribution.

THE EDITORS

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familiar maneuver launched by the neo-fascists. Faithful followers of Hitler and Mussolini, those Italian nazis are trying once more to pave the way for a dictatorship by fanning the fires of exasperated nationalism and national frustration.

Recent developments on two major issues—land reform and African colonies—are good examples of the handling, or rather mishandling, of the situation by the present Italian Government.

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ON EASTER SUNDAY, Premier De Gasperi announced at last a draft plan of land reform—one of the main planks of the Christian-Democratic electoral platform both in June 1946 and in April 1948.

By a long and complicated procedure, the plan would eventually put some 3,000,000 acres at the disposal of Italy's 4,000,000 landless peasants. The land would be made available first from State and Community holdings and then from large, privately-owned estates. No mention has been made of the large Church holdings. Exempted from the reform would be intensively cultivated private estates with an assessed income of less than 60,000 lire (1937-39 value, equivalent to about $3,650) and extensively cultivated private properties with an assessed value of less than 50,000 lire, calculated on the same basis. This means that the limit on private ownership would be set for practical purposes at about 250 acres in the most intensively cultivated areas and at about 750 acres in the extensively cultivated areas. All larger estates would be required to cede to the peasants a percentage of their land which, according to the total income of the property, would run from a minimum of 20% to a maximum of 50%. It has been estimated that about 8,000 private landowners would be affected; 100 of them would be subject to the maximum contribution of 50% of their holdings.

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A special Government Agency (the Land Reclamation Bureau) would be in charge of supervising the whole operation. The Agency would: a) determine the lands to be expropriated and distributed among the peasants; b) set the time limit during which the owners must either sell or lease on nominal terms their excess holdings to the peasants; c) take over the excess land still in the hands of the original owners and pay for it, partly in cash and partly in Government bonds; d) parcel out the land among the peasants and extend them the necessary credits for the purchase and improvement of the land itself.

Approximate estimates by Italian semi-official sources set at about 100 billion lire ($170,000,000) the expense to be directly borne by the State for the purchase of land and at about 400 billion lire ($700,000,000) the expense for land improvement. Eventually, some 120,000 to 150,000 families, representing perhaps 12 to 15% of Italy's landless rural population, would settle down on land made available by the reform.

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BITTER CRITICISM has been immediately leveled at the reform plan from both the Right and the Left. Conservative interests have stressed that the plan strikes a death blow at the very principle of private ownership and would moreover bring about a drop in productivity over a period of years, thus crippling Italian economy at a most delicate phase of its recovery. Leftist critics have naturally taken the opposite stand. Even Signor Saragat's moderate Socialists have pointed out that ". . . the artificial creation of a class of small landowners . . . represents a bad and in any case inadequate solution to an urgent social problem." Almost everyone agrees that, by using taxable income (that is yield per acre) as the only basis, the plan puts a premium on negligence and penalizes the progressive farmer.

Whatever the technical and political merits of the draft plan announced by Signor De Gasperi may be, one thing is certain: its very existence is going to make for further delay in the actual tackling of the problem.

The adoption of a much simpler plan, limited for the time being to the breaking up of the large, poorly cultivated estates (say over 500 acres) but *effective immediately*, would provide some immediate satisfaction to the peasants, correct some of the most glaring social injustices and above all would be a concrete token of the Government's determination to carry out, by progressive steps, a complete program of reforms.

As things stand now, the draft plan will have first to be examined by the CIR (Interministerial Committee on Reconstruction), then discussed by the Council of Ministers, where opinions are reported to be far from unanimous. According to the Italian press, Parliament will not be ready, anyway, to take the matter up until some time in the Fall, if not later. Since debate is bound to be long and bitter both in the Chamber and in the Senate, practical enactment of the reform is not expected until 1951, at the very earliest.

No wonder that a feeling of bitterness and frustration should continue to spread among all those who have a direct interest at stake in the reform. Disappointed peasants are growing more impatient and restless. Bewildered landowners, banks and other credit institutions recoil from investing capital in the improvement of properties as long as their ultimate fate remains in doubt. Land values are dropping and productivity is inevitably and adversely affected.

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LET'S NOW turn to the policy followed by the Italian Government in the colonial question.

As early as a few months ago, it became increasingly apparent that a majority of the United Nations, including many Great Powers, were opposed to a restoration of Italian rule in most of the pre-fascist Colonies. This attitude was clear enough, whatever the validity of the strategic, political and psychological reasons which motivate it; and it must be assumed that the Italian Government was acquainted with the situation through the reports of its representatives abroad.

Under the circumstances, it seems that the wise, and smart, course would have been to lay candidly the facts before the Italian people, to wit:

(1) the opposition to an Italian return to Africa is largely a consequence of the crimes and mistakes of the fascist era;

(2) Lybia, Eritrea and Somaliland cannot provide, in any case, a solution to Italy's tragic overpopulation problem; (In 1938, at the peak of Italian colonial activity when Ethiopia was included in the fascist African "empire," only about 200,000 people had settled down in those territories—that is, one-half of the increase in Italy's population for only one year. Moreover, per capita investment was one of the highest on record, emphasizing the unsuitability of those territories for large scale colonization by Italy, always so short of capital.)

(3) the new Italy cannot and should not press the question in terms of territory and national prestige;

(4) the vital point is to open up, in Africa and elsewhere, sufficient outlets to Italian emigration and guarantee, through international agreements, that Italian workers will enjoy equality of opportunity and financial assistance in those territories, whatever the flag waving over them.

On the contrary, the Italian people were left wide open to the propaganda of the professional nationalists and colonialists. Day by day, the average Italian was subjected to an intensive barrage not only by the neo-fascist sheets but by many "independent" papers. Italy's "rights" to her former Colonies were proclaimed in loud and uncompromising terms. The crimes and mistakes of the fascist administration were glossed over or dismissed with the statement that other colonial Powers had done the same or worse. The government was told that "the nation" could not accept further sacrifices and anyone who hinted at a compromise was shouted down as a traitor. Finally, no effort was spared to create a feeling that, despite the "machinations" of some Powers bent on humiliating Italy, it was still possible, with the help of some friendly nations, to regain control of most, if not all, of the former Colonies.

No wonder that, when the question came up again before the UN a few weeks ago and the real situation was made public, the reaction of many Italians should be one of angry surprise and resentment. The resentment was equally directed against the Government which had apparently failed to protect the national interests and against the foreign countries which had apparently "cheated" Italy once more.

Foreign Minister Sforza was singled out for especially violent attack by the nationalists and neo-fascists. They hurled against him the same accusations and the very same words of abuse that fascists and nationalists had hurled against him back in the early twenties, when he settled by negotiation with Jugoslavia the issue of Italy's eastern frontier.

Among the foreign countries, Great Britain came in, of course, for the largest share of accusations and abuse; but the United States was not spared either. The mildest criticism was, and is, that we have "failed to understand Italy's needs and aspirations" and that we have followed "blindly" the British lead in this matter.

Needless to say, the Communists have joyfully joined nationalists and neo-fascists in denouncing the Western Powers and the present Italian Government.

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IT IS AGAINST this background that the results of the Sardinian elections must be viewed and interpreted. They convey a pointed, twofold warning.

In a country like Italy, communism, as a political movement, cannot be defeated by police measures and armed force alone: it takes a courageous, progressive policy of concrete social and economic reforms.

On the other hand, the revival of the fascist spirit in Italy cannot be ignored or lightly dismissed any longer. Nor can the Government escape its share of responsibility for it. The handling of the colonial question is a striking example. More generally the essential task of political education has been woefully neglected—the only effective means of immunizing the Italian people against a propaganda which, from an appeal to the sentiments and resentments of the most extreme nationalism, was bound to turn into an outright vindication of fascism.

In the last few days, Premier De Gasperi himself seems to have realized that this "laissez faire" policy has been carried too far. In a speech delivered on May 15, exactly one week after the Sardinian elections, he warned the neo-fascist MSI that the Government would not tolerate "the vindication and revival of fascism" and that the democratic forces would "defend themselves by exhuming pages of history which they would have

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preferred to leave to the judgment of posterity."

Today, organized neo-fascism, as such, is still a comparatively minor movement—though the elections for the students' councils at the University of Rome confirmed a few weeks ago that it has succeeded in gaining the active support of many youths of the lower and middle bourgeoisie. But what makes this neo-fascism potentially dangerous on a national scale is the hold that nationalistic myths and passions still have on large sections of the middle and upper classes. And as Mussolini already proved in Italy, one of the easiest ways to smuggle fascism into power is to wrap it up in the folds of the national flag.

Did They Know It Was Loaded?

Psychologists, serving the advertising industry, pass around some leading questions

James Rorty

SUPPOSE a polite collegian appeared on your doorstep and proceeded to ask these questions, read from a typed questionnaire:

18. Have you heard about the TVA or the Tennessee Valley electric project?

19. The TVA was built by the government to control floods and to make and sell electricity. Do you think the United States Government should build more projects like the TVA or not?

20. Did you know that the TVA can charge lower rates because it was built with government money and pays no taxes or interest to the government?

22. (Ask those who said "more" or "don't know" in Question 19). Knowing that the TVA is supported by public funds and higher taxes, do you think the government should build more TVA's?

23. (Ask everyone) which do you think is better, a) to have independent electric companies which are built and run privately and which pay taxes to the government or b) electric projects like the TVA which are built with the taxpayer's money and which themselves pay no taxes to the government?

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WHAT WOULD you say if you were asked these questions? What's that? Not so loud!

Exactly. I care not who makes the laws of my country if I can write its questionnaires.

But suppose that, having concluded his catechism, the youth explained that he was a student in the psychology classes of the distinguished professor X at the local university, and that he was asking these questions as part of a market and opinion survey conducted by the Psychological Corporation, a corporation that numbers among its officers some of our best-known psychologists.

What would you say then? What?

Really, sir, I must ask you to moderate your language. You're too sensitive, too idealistic. Why shouldn't our chaste academicians cut themselves in on the "research" and opinion poll racket as practiced by the glamor boys of the advertising agencies? Especially when they are in a position to get it for their clients wholesale, with the unpaid or underpaid help of students who are sustained wholly or in part by the pure passion of science?

Business is business, and the psychologists have been in the advertising business up to their ears these many years. The Psychological Corporation was first organized in 1921. It is now a half million dollar corporation, with a gross take in 1947 of a million and a quarter. In 1946 the original 1,000 shares of common stock in the corporation were split four for one, an additional 4,000 shares were issued, and the original dividend limitation of $6 per share was removed.

Judging from the questions I have quoted, the methods used by our psychological eager beavers to make themselves acceptable and useful to business are much like what they were fifteen years ago. This writer's *Our Master's Voice: Advertising*, published in 1934, contains a chapter on the Psychological Corporation. It is entitled "Psychology Asks: How'm I Doing?"

The corporation wasn't doing so well then, but it was trying hard—so hard that its efforts had occasioned a row at the 1933 convention of the American Psychological Association. At this convention Dr. Henry C. Link, then secretary and treasurer of the corporation and now its vice-president, presented a report which greatly disturbed some of his colleagues. The most vocal

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objector was Dr. A. W. Kornhauser, then associate professor of business psychology at the University of Chicago. Dr. Kornhauser seemed to feel that the corporation of which he was a stockholder might have become just a tiny bit contaminated as a result of its dalliance in the rough and rugged world of advertising.

It had sponsored a cooperative study, conducted gratuitously by sixty psychologists, of the effectiveness of advertising and published it in the January, 1933, issue of the *Harvard Business Review*. The study proved that advertising was very effective indeed, that some advertising was more effective than other advertising, and that consumer surveys yielded useful data on what pulled and what didn't. As an original, disinterested effort toward the "advancement of scientific knowledge of human behavior," the survey was less than world-shaking. But it certainly pulled in clients for the Psychological Corporation. In 1933 and thereafter the corporation conducted many studies, sponsored and paid for by individual advertisers and staffed by its wideflung organization of psychology professors, instructors and students.

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THE CURRENT market and opinion survey includes in addition to the quoted questions on TVA about fifty other questions, some of them dealing with consumer preferences for such things as automobiles and flashlights, others asking opinions on current political issues.

To readers of this magazine it is scarcely necessary to point out the flagrantly "loaded" characteristics of the TVA questions. They express the stereotyped propaganda line of the private power lobby and their effect on any person ignorant of the true facts about the TVA would be undoubtedly to prejudice him or her against the agency.

TVA is of course not solely a power agency. It has clearly defined and closely integrated responsibilities relating to flood control, navigation, the generation of power, the production, testing and demonstration of experimental fertilizers, the national defense, the conservation of soil, the reforestation of cutover and eroded land, the economic and social advancement of the region.

TVA's power is wholesaled to locally-owned and managed power cooperatives which pay taxes, make tax equivalent payments and pay interest on bonds or on REA loans. TVA itself makes payments in lieu of taxes to states and counties—these payments being greater in total than the taxes paid by the private interests that TVA superseded. TVA's power operations have earned a net return to the power investment of better than four per cent—twice the rate ordinarily charged on government loans.

All these facts have been verified repeatedly by independent analysts. Recently a Hoover Commission task force found that the Authority is presently earning more than sufficient revenues from power operations to repay the investment in power facilities, with interest.

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FOR WHAT purpose is the Psychological Corporation asking these loaded questions? For its own information? In behalf of a client? What client? But how can it hope to inform itself or its clients by asking loaded questions? But it doesn't know they are loaded? And it doesn't know that asking loaded questions to any considerable number of people is itself one of the most effective and damaging forms of propaganda?

But this is outrageous and unthinkable! The highly trained and experienced technicians of the Psychological Corporation are not fools or incompetents.

What are they then?

Maybe that's one for Dr. Kornhauser, whose 1933 indignations seemed to have mellowed a bit. He is now listed on the Board of Directors of the corporation.

Meanwhile the writer may be permitted his own guess as to how reputable professional people come to find themselves publicly at odds with their own professional ethics and obligations.

My guess is that they actually didn't know it was loaded. Psychologists, too, can be victims of propaganda. And these are business psychologists. They live and practice in a climate of unexamined values and beliefs not very different from the intellectual and ethical climate of the average large advertising agency. In that climate it is axiomatic that the TVA is strictly and solely a tax-subsidized invasion of the proper sphere of the private utility business. Hence when the psychologists of the Psychological Corporation wrote this axiom into Question 21, it is quite possible that they did not know it was demonstrably false. Or perhaps they did not care. In the purely instrumental austerities of the advertising business to which they have made their profession ancillary, truth and falsity are irrelevant concepts emptied of all meaning and emotion.

As for the propaganda effect of asking loaded questions, it is again possible that they didn't know—or more accurately, feel—that they were loaded.

But doesn't this make the psychologists fools and incompetents? Not necessarily. What has happened is simply that a limitation of moral responsibility has become institutionalized in professional standards.

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The Motives Behind the Labor Party Program

Nationalization in Britain—a question of efficiency or power?

J. L. Benvenisti

IN THE May issue of *Atlantic Monthly* there appeared an article entitled, "British Socialism on Trial." The author was Mr. Geoffrey Crowther, editor of the *Economist,* and in the main it did not fall below Mr. Crowther's high standard.

Even so there are certain points I should like to qualify, for Mr. Crowther. I feel, even if he does not on this occasion avowedly write as an economist, that he nevertheless looks at things with the economist's eye; and good economists don't invariably make good psychologists, good moralists, or for that matter, good politicians.

In case you have not read the article in question, here in brief is the substance of it. The various British nationalization schemes are not very important. They make little difference to anybody's way of life. The workers in them are working much the same way as before, and usually under the same people. Nationalization, above all, has made no psychological difference. The workers do not work any harder because they are working for the state, the people, the community, or what have you.

But all this, according to Mr. Crowther, is really very secondary. The real essence in Britain's undoubtedly leftward trend lies not in her nationalization schemes but in an ideological change which expresses itself in "the contrast between the gospel of work and the endowment of leisure, between the premium that our fathers put upon thrift and the stimulus the present age gives to consumption." And Mr. Crowther thinks that Britain has gone "rather too far in its devotion to the latter alternatives," and this is really the issue on which British socialism must be judged.

Now this is certainly a serious matter. If you abstain beyond a certain point from working you will very soon have nothing with which to endow your leisure, and if you do not, again up to a certain point, practice the virtue of thrift you will soon have nothing to consume.

But is this purely material danger the only one that Mr. Crowther sees in British socialism? Apparently it is, for he writes, "Certainly nobody in England thinks the basic liberties in England are endangered by the socialist experiments we have had." And later, "I think Americans can rely upon it that the socialist experiment will be put to the most searching test at least once in every five years, and that by this process what is proved to be error in it will be washed away, while what is valuable will remain. . . ."

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THAT MEANS that not only here and now are the basic liberties unthreatened (which is true) but that we "can rely upon it" that they will not be threatened in the future, and on that score, though I am still an optimist, I am not quite so optimistic as Mr. Crowther.

The trouble with the British, as it seems to me, is not that they have an excessive reluctance to defer consumption, nor even that they believe that they can have their cake and eat it, for most imprudent people are subject to that illusion. It is that so many of them seem to feel morally outraged when anybody questions the validity of the latter proposition. The incredulous rage with which so many labor back-benchers greeted Sir Stafford Cripps' latest highly realistic austerity budget is a case in point. All this seems to me to be a symptom of a greater matter, namely, the growth of a certain irrationalism in British politics—a tendency for major issues to be decided by emotions rather than by reason, and not always by very nice emotions at that.

Take for instance the question of the nationalization projects on the Labor Party's new program, of which Mr. Crowther says nothing in his article, though actually the *Economist* has commented frequently, and in the main most adversely on this matter. What is the meaning of these projects? What is the reason for them? The original nationalization projects had, for the most part at any rate, some special kind of justification. The state, as in the coal mines, was asked to step in and do something which private enterprise probably could not do and had cer-

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tainly most demonstrably failed to do. But what is the purpose of the present lot—meat wholesaling, sugar manufacture, cement and the rest, with chemicals and shipbuilding to follow?

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THE AVOWED purpose is, of course, to increase efficiency, but there is not a shred of evidence that they will do anything of the kind, and I am inclined to think that the Labor Party leaders who advocate them with such fervor are perfectly well aware of this. The thing has never been, except in a very remote and problematical way, a question of efficiency. It has always been a question of power. It has been a question of displacing a certain type of man, and even a certain type of culture, by another kind of man and another kind of culture. I don't say that this is necessarily very wicked. It is a natural and even healthy development in a process of political evolution, but the fact that the whole case is argued on the completely unproven and unprovable issue of efficiency gives one the impression of a certain malice being at work which snatches at any argument that will disguise its real nature. It is this element of malice, one might almost even use the term class hatred, lurking beneath the surface of British public life, even if it most certainly does not dominate it, that makes one somewhat apprehensive—that causes one to wonder whether Britain may not be in the throes of a deeper moral crisis than is suggested by surface appearances. This is the really dangerous element in British socialism.

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The danger may express itself in a variety of ways, and the present writer is by no means alone in having observed them. For instance, there is the very strong tie-up between the Labor Party and the trade unions. This has been a source of great strength to the present government. We have had a certain amount of unofficial strikes, but despite that the unions have played ball with the government. They have, in fact, stuck by it in thick and thin, with the result that the past four years have been an unprecedented era of industrial peace.

There is little reason to suppose that this undoubted blessing will continue if Churchill takes office after the next election. I think the unions will fight him tooth and nail. Nor do I think that they will fight him to gain a few economic vantage points. They will fight him, if they can, to break him. They will fight him for class power. For it is that which this trade-union Labor Government has tasted and they will not get it out of their system in a hurry.

THEN THERE is another danger, and this too is old stuff to anyone who has made a study of this kind of thing. The danger here inheres not in the character of the Labor Party as such, but in the whole conception of the welfare state. The welfare state is committed to one thing on which it must, and dare not default —the provision of a certain minimum of consumption and well-being for all. And if anything in the general world economic setup prevents its honoring that commitment by normal means, there will be a temptation to use abnormal means. If there were a depression on an international scale, the normal capitalistic method would be to take up the slack in unemployment—that is to say, let the loss fall more or less haphazardly on a minority of the citizens and leave the rest pretty well where they were. But a socialist government dare not do this. It must spread the loss over the whole community, and when this becomes intolerable, must seek a corrective for a dwindling income in lowered costs and higher competitive power—that is to say, increased output per man-hour. It may thus be driven to new types of sanction—the avoidance of which has been one of the chief merits of the market economy.

Now it is perfectly true that Churchill is today as much committed to the welfare state as his opponents, but I still think that it is in the Labor Party that the individuals are more likely to be found who would find the required qualities of ruthlessness rather to their liking, and whose appetite for ever-extending power would be whetted by such a situation.

Please do not infer from this that Britain is going totalitarian overnight. Above all do not begin, on the strength of what I have written, to hold up Britain as a kind of awful warning, an object lesson of what happens to people who, even by the most trifling leftward inclination, step an inch from the way, put their feet upon the slippery slope, take the broad path to destruction, or do anything else which touristic, perambulatory or gravitational metaphor can represent as an act of free, fateful but misguided choice.

There has never been a clear definitive choice of this kind. There never was a clear-cut alternative between two types of political and economic organizations, and in this precise sense the British cannot be said ever to have chosen socialism at all. Leftism, socialism, or whatever you like to call it, happened to them as it is happening gradually to pretty well all western nations, not excluding America.

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IN BRITAIN, as elsewhere, all political parties were tending much in the same direction, and the emergence of the kind of man who is

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now entrenched in the Labor Party was bound to come sooner or later. It was the slow drift of our time in a certain direction, brought about by another equally inevitable drift—the growing political consciousness of organized labor with its almost invariable sense of social resentment and grievance.

What I have just said has, I am aware, a certain flavor of Marxist determinism. The emergence of the proletariat as the supreme political force, because it is not only more numerous, but also more compact than any other force, is, it is true, a commonplace of communist doctrine. But this does not make it necessarily false. The communist analysis of this process is perfectly realistic and correct. The situation is accurately described. The only mistake of the communists is to believe that there is some ineluctable necessity in it for everybody to behave like a blackguard.

There is no such necessity, but there is nevertheless the danger of people behaving like blackguards, and there is no certainty that the British, or at any rate a significant number of them, might not in a certain set of circumstances behave in just that way. The British are not archangels. They are human, and there is with them, as with everybody else, a point of moral strain under which they are liable to crack, a point of illusion and of temptation at which they are liable to succumb.

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It is extremely necessary to point this out because there is a great deal too much talk about the British being too kindly, too sensible, too imbued with a tradition towards freedom and fair play, or to half a dozen other things for certain possibilities to be realized in that country. I believe such talk is liable to be misleading.

There is a very strong tradition of tolerance in Britain, and this has for some generations made Britain a very pleasant and civilized place in which to live. But there have been other moral climates in the past and they may not inconceivably return. Why shouldn't they?

At present the thing is a cloud no bigger than a man's hand, but that cloud is most certainly there. Only the future can show what it portends.

Perhaps Mr. Crowther was afraid of speaking as openly as I have, because as an Englishman he was afraid of letting his country down in an American magazine. But if that is so, Mr. Crowther's hesitation, if such indeed there was, is really groundless. The question is not whether the symptoms of a certain malady are apparent in Britain, but whether the malady will be mastered. Personally I believe that it will, but I see no point in denying that the malady exists.

Communications

New Farm Program

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editors: . . . There is one sentence in your editorial [April 22, on the Administration's new farm proposals] which raises some question in my mind: "Designation of *cash* income rather than over-all income as the parity basis, however, penalizes the family farmer who produces most of his own food and feed, and it puts a premium on one-crop farming."

Actually, I don't believe the proposal would work this way. So far as the food which is raised and consumed by farmers themselves is concerned, it seems to me that it has the same real value whether it is run through a parity income or support price set of calculations or not. That is, it supplies food for the farm family and were it counted in the income statistics to start with it would simply be taken out by an offsetting calculation in the end. So far as the farmer who produces his own feed is concerned, were such feed sold it would be covered in the calculations and supported. Or, if it were fed to livestock, the resulting livestock product would be covered in the calculations and the price support system. As a practical matter, farmers must have cash income not only to pay their ordinary running or production expenses but equally to cover the expenses of farm family living and, we hope, savings.

CHARLES F. BRANNAN,
Secretary,
Department of Agriculture.

Education and Living

Brookville, Ohio

TO the Editors: Because of my close association with Mr. Borsodi during the development of his book, *Education and Living,* I am greatly interested in the reviews that are published. It is heartening to find a few understanding comments, and I greatly appreciate the one you published in the April 22nd COMMONWEAL. The scope and nature of the book make it difficult to do an adequate review, and in the main I think you did a very good thing of it.

However, I wonder if you didn't read more of your own point of view into it than is actually there, so far as "tradition" is concerned. Mr. Borsodi is not committed to tradition as such. He is committed to finding a good pattern (normal) for human living. Much that is in a traditional pattern of living did suit human norms, but his first attempt is to find, scientifically, all the norms that are possible, and then to develop a proper pattern to sustain and fulfill those norms.

Thus, his concrete suggestions for the normal family, normal community, region, etc., do not seem to me doctrinaire, as you say, but very much in line with scientific norms. Moreover, some of his suggestions which are unacceptable to Catholics seem to be called for to achieve

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any kind of norms out of our present abnormal depths.

Anything concrete in the social sciences seems doctrinaire, because we are so used to merely discussing *ideas*—not programs of living—and until we agree on some norms, it is likely that it will continue to seem so. Tradition may follow the norm quite closely, but scientific analysis of the actual needs and functions of our human organism will be more accurate.

In the next volume, The Thirteen Problems of Living, I believe Mr. Borsodi has continued this scientific analysis of otherwise hazy and vague material now scattered all through the social sciences.

MILDRED J. LOOMIS,
Editor,
The Interpreter.

Christian Art

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Since I wrote the editorial in *Liturgical Arts* (February, 1949) to which Mr. Michael D. Reagan refers in his COMMONWEAL letter of May 6, I wish to assure him that I am aware of the dangers of merely training more teachers who may kill ". . . the joy of art before it can decently be developed in their pupils. . . ." I took care of that point when I stated: "It is true that any school at a university will insist on degrees and academic credits but that need not be too great an obstacle. If the director and the teacher are *alive* and aware of what is going on, the academic hurdle can be taken in stride." What I have in mind, even at the type of school which might be developed at the Catholic University, is a *master to apprentice* relationship. On that basis I feel that I am in accord with Mr. Michael D. Reagan's views.

MAURICE LAVANOUX,
Managing Editor,
Liturgical Arts.

Comic Books

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: I was rather sorry to see the appearance of the article entitled, *How the Comic Book Started,* in your May 20th issue. A great deal of serious thought is being given to the reading of comic books these days, by prominent educators and psychologists. Most thought on the matter can be channeled into the thesis that we had better accept this new type of reading and do with it what we can, rather than fight it blindly.

Even as a brief history of the comic book, John Vosburgh's article was noticeably lacking in giving a real background to comics reading as a whole, and the early methods of picture writing used by the ancient Egyptians and cliff dwellers. It is lamentable that Harry Wildenberg should be happiest when he reads, "that some school children have held comic book bonfires." It is even more lamentable that COMMONWEAL should publish this article which seems intended in tone to take the side of those who would fight blindly against that which they do not understand, rather than remove the veil of ignorance. It is not so very long ago that even *Huckleberry Finn* was forbidden to children, and it is within our own generation that *all* book reading was looked upon by many parents and advisors of children, as breeding idleness and daydreaming.

Perhaps it is time to re-evaluate our standards of juvenile literature. Children want action in their reading, they want to follow it easily, they want security and reassurance that the world is still all right when the villains and the heros get their just desserts. They want to see the reflection of their own fantasies when they read, they want escape from the scourge of being little people in a grown up's world. Comics reading gives them this. How about the so-called, "good literature?"

That the standards of some of our comics books could be raised, I am fully in harmony with. That laws could be enacted demanding other standards which would insure preventing damaging effects to children's eyes, I would agree with. It is believed now that some 98% of children between the ages of 8 and 12 read comics. These children come from every type of family background, and the individual intelligence quotient seems to make no difference.

Edwin Lukas, Director of the Society for the Prevention of Crime, has this to say: "I am unaware of the existence of any scientifically established causal relationship between the reading of comic books and delinquency." And Dr. Mandel Sherman, Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Chicago: "In studying the causes of behavior problems of children for many years, I have never seen one instance of a child whose behavior disturbance originated in the reading of comic books, nor even a case of a delinquent whose behavior was exaggerated by such readings."

Picture strips, or comics, offer great possibilities for education as well as for entertainment. They are one of the most effective ways of telling a story. They get ideas over to those who find other types of reading laborious and difficult. The comics *can* be inspired and informative, imaginative, interesting and funny, all at once. Let the parents and the leaders of children devote their energies to taking advantage of the possibilities which are potentially their, in the fifty million comics books which are sold monthly on United States newsstands; instead, through their anxiety, they cause children more damage than comics book reading will ever do.

FRANCIS J. KAFKA,
School of Education,
New York University.

CARE Parcels for Europe

THE NON-PROFIT agency, Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe, Inc. (20 Broad St., New York 5, N. Y.) announces two new food packages in addition to its standard 22½-pound $10 food parcel. The new $5.50 Thrift package available for delivery to 11 European countries contains a two-pound boneless ham, together with rice, cheese, peanut butter, coffee, condensed milk, chocolate and spices. The CARE ten-pound lard package is now available for $4.00.

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Catholic International News

Jap Villages Ask for Priests

THE POPULARITY of the Catholic Church in Japan outside of its traditional center in the Nagasaki area was shown during April when residents of eleven towns and villages near Kyoto and Osaka asked that priests be assigned to teach them the faith. In the past more than half of the Catholics in Japan, now totaling close to 120,000, resided in Nagasaki.

Bishop Paul Tagushi of Osaka announced that in addition to Sagamura, where the entire population offered to take instructions for entry into the Church several months ago, four neighboring villages in his diocese have requested priests to prepare them for baptism.

In the Kyoto area, the St. Francis parish has opened seven missions in seven towns having a total population of 10,000. The Mayors of four of the towns requested that missions be opened, and in three others, local citizen groups petitioned to have mission centers started. St. Francis parish also conducts mission centers in two suburbs of Kyoto.

Lay teachers are helping the priests in both the Kyoto and Osaka areas in giving catechism lessons. They have been of considerable service in the task of teaching the entire population of Sagamura, where the first group to complete instructions, twelve boys, were received into the Church on Easter Sunday. Thirty-eight girls were baptized a week later. It is expected that similar groups will be baptized each week until August 15, when a large number of adults will receive the Sacrament together. (Tokyo, 5/21—CIP.)

Orthodox Prelate Scores Protestants

BY ACCUSING Western Protestants of both theological heresy and political maneuvers "under the disguise of Christianity," Archbishop Hermogen of Kazan, Head of the Moscow Ecclesiastical Academy of the Russian Orthodox Church, attempted to justify the twofold attitude of the present representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate: complete maintenance of the Orthodox Church's dogma and traditions in theological matters, subordination to the Soviet Government's social and international policies in external activities. The Archbishop's statements were made in an address on the "History of Christian Thought in the Twentieth Century," dealing largely with the Amsterdam Conference of the World Council of Churches last summer. The address was published in No. 12 of the 1948 series of the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*. In an earlier address, Archbishop Hermogen attacked the Catholic Church for its alleged support of both "fascism" and "American capitalism." (See also page 188.)

Archbishop Hermogen called the Ecumenical Movement "the logical expression of radical Protestantism with its denial of the divinity and humanity of Christ, the seven Sacraments, the Virgin Mary, and the veneration of Saints." He added: "It is true that the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ, often occurs in the speeches and proclamations of the World Council of Churches, but this is mere hypocrisy, since the Protestants, who constituted the majority at the Amsterdam Assembly, do not fully confess the Nicene Creed."

"Moreover," the Orthodox Church leader added, "since the Amsterdam Assembly, the Ecumenical Movement has revealed itself as a political party and as a confederate of those who would launch a third, bloody war, although this intention is masked in Christian phraseology. The political aspect of the Assembly was clearly shown in its agenda which reflected the most acute political questions of the day. Suffice it to mention that, as a delegate of the Presbyterian Church of the USA, John Dulles, the inspirer of American foreign policy, took a most active part in the work of the Assembly. Dulles sought to obtain from the World Council of Churches a resolution which condemned Communism, and naturally such a resolution was sanctioned. Because the Ecumenical Movement represents fundamentally a political movement under the disguise of Christianity, it is unacceptable for our theological schools. . . ."

The reference to Mr. John Foster Dulles was not the only instance in which the Archbishop adopted the current clichés of communist propaganda. Even in his analysis of the present religious crisis in the world, "American war-mongering" was listed as one of the decisive factors: "The birth of a new socialist order in Russia, two World Wars, and the preparation of a third World War by the United States have had an effect on Christian thought. The latter is experiencing a profound crisis at the present time."

Russia, on the other hand, according to Archbishop Hermogen, is experiencing "a break-through of religious sentiment among the people, an intensified quest for a religious way of life to calm bewildered souls, a healing of the relations between human beings, and a reshaping of the life of society." It is the task of Church leaders and theologians to "canalize the flow of religious feelings among the Russian people within the dogmatic and canonical river-bed of the Orthodox Church."

Archbishop Hermogen's statements indicate that the leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church, while opposed to modernism in theological matters, identify themselves in all matters concerning public life with the Soviet régime, as their pre-Soviet predecessors identified themselves with the Czarist régime.

The seminaries of the Orthodox Church are also playing an important rôle in the effort to unite the annexed territories in the West with Russia. This may be concluded from the fact that of the 10 seminaries now in operation (Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Odessa, Minsk, Stavropol, Vologda, Vilna, Grodno, Czernovitz), three are in the annexed territories. (New York, 5/14—CIP.)

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The Screen

Imports

EVEN WHEN OUR screens are not showing first-rate European films, we realize that we are fortunate in being able to see movies from abroad. They frequently have a realistic, down-to-earth quality, and they always offer an interesting change in diet from our Hollywood products. So let's look at a few of the new imports.

From Italy comes *"Guaglio,"* a sort of an up-to-date Italian version of "Boys' Town." It combines realism and sentiment, perhaps not as much of the latter as was exhibited in the Hollywood film that starred Spencer Tracy and Mickey Rooney, nor as much bitter realism as was in the extraordinary Italian movie "Shoe-Shine." But "Guaglio" does have an appeal all of its own. Its title, pronounced Wal-yo, is an expression of greeting used by street urchins; and the film fairly bulges with kids, the toughest looking bunch that has been gathered in a long time.

Actually there are only 20 or 30 of these Dead End boys who participate in the home started by a young priest; but the point is well made that there are in Italy thousands of homeless waifs, victims of the war, left to fend for themselves. The priest, excellently portrayed by Adolfo Celi, one of the few actors in this cast, which consists mainly of non-professionals, gives up his plan to go abroad as a missionary, and he devotes himself to caring for these youngsters, most of whom already have a police record. There are many ups and downs in the execution of his plans; and after one almost disastrous experience he is certain that a Boys' Town could only happen in the movies. Under the direction of Luigi Comencini the picture moves along in a good cinematic pace. The tragic undertone of the whole situation is lightened by the many humorous episodes and by the priest's strong belief in the value of his work. It is not only through his own efforts that he succeeds, and the film closes with the hopeful expression that more such homes will be organized in the effort to do *something* for Italy's war-stricken children. (The English subtitles are helpful to audiences who don't speak the language. I had the idea, however, that they were not translating *all* the gutter language that the boys were using.)

Another Italian film with a post-war subject is *"The Bandit,"* a melodrama that forcefully visualizes the desperate conditions to which soldiers frequently return. Director Alberto Lattuada effectively contrasts the high hopes of the returning men with the rubble and immorality at home. The central figure in this case locates his sister in a house of prostitution: he kills the man responsible for her death, joins a bandit gang and goes from bad to worse, after a few attempts at playing Robin Hood. This film is extremely well acted throughout, especially by the leads, Amadeo Nazzari and Anna Magnani. But again we wonder how far movies should be allowed to go in their realistic portrayal of immorality.

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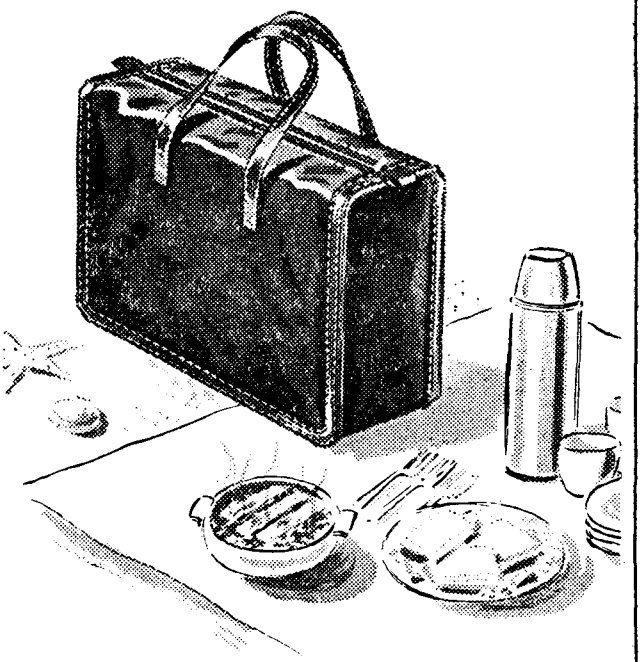

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This one frequently over-steps the bounds. Its only justification is in its stirring indictment of war and the moral confusion that follows.

It is surprising that a film like *"Don Quixote"* which comes from Spain, a supposedly Catholic country, is not more Catholic in spirit. Actually the movie is at times somewhat irreverent toward things Catholic. I suspect that this stems more from Cervantes' original novel than from any intention on the part of the film makers. On the whole, "Don Quixote" does not work out very well as a film; its satire on chivalry is more effective in the mind than when actually visualized; and in this case, although the movie is very well acted, especially by Rafael Rivelles as the knight and Juan Calvo as his squire, and although the sets and photography are beautiful, the piece as a whole becomes interminably dull. Director Rafael Gil allows Cervantes' characters to talk too much, and while this talk (assisted for us by English subtitles) is amusing, a movie still has to move. Too many of the novel's episodes are crowded into the film, and while you have respect for this book and its fine characterization, you become as exhausted as the mad knight when you complete his journeys.

An import from Belgium, which is only 45 minutes long, shows how a subject which seems completely static can be made into exciting cinema material. *"Rubens"* is a documentary film that examines the work of the famous sixteenth-century painter. Produced and directed by Paul Haesaerts and Henri Storck, this film moves, through skilful use of cameras, from painting to painting as it compares Rubens with other artists, as it traces this master's composition, as it studies Rubens' subjects and techniques. Accompanied by an English commentary, the visuals actually flow, and one can appreciate the paintings anew as the camera captures their movement and detail. This film is now being shown in theatres throughout the country; but it can also be obtained in 16mm for use in schools, museums and libraries. "Rubens" is a treat not to be missed.

From England has come a little movie that won't startle anyone for originality or excitement; but *"All Over Town"* has a pleasant quality in its story and acting that makes it worth your effort. Its plot has to do with a flier who returns to his seaside town after the war to resume his job as reporter on the local newspaper. But now he finds this stuffy, bigoted town a little hard to take; and when he becomes part-owner of the paper he makes things fly. His biggest attack is against the housing scheme that will turn the town into a fun fair with profits for the monied class and considerable inconvenience for the everyday folk. Under the direction of Derek Twist, this story snails along, but its characterizations are good; and as with so many English films the minor characters are done to perfection. I don't mean to depreciate the efforts of Norman Wooland, who plays the lead with vigor and warmth, or of Sarah Churchill as his fiancee who tries for a while to get him to go to greener pastures. Funniest of the many amusing episodes shows the local opera society in action; it'll make you think twice if you're ever asked to do amateur theatricals again.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Dawson's Leitmotif

WALDEMAR GURIAN

THOSE READERS are right who say that the Gifford Lectures of Christopher Dawson, now published under the title *Religion and Culture* (Sheed and Ward, $3.50), contain for the most part ideas to be found in previous works of the great English student of civilization. But nevertheless this volume ought to be read by philosophers and historians, by anthropologists and sociologists—by anyone eager to understand the background of the crisis in our culture.

Christopher Dawson shows in a quiet way the unity between culture and religion. His very ability to make brilliant understatements and to display without pride, as something self-evident, his extraordinarily broad knowledge make his synthesis particularly impressive. Culture is an organized way of life, and is vitalized by human acceptance of a transcendental spiritual power which shapes and permeates all human activities, as well as the basic patterns of social life and order. There is, of course, not one, universal and abstract realization of this unity between religious beliefs and the world of human cultures. There are various cultures—whose approaches to religion are influenced by geographical, economic, psychological, historical conditions.

But these conditions determine only the forms of religion—they cannot be regarded as determining religion or even creating the need for it. There is a religious experience which appears in very different historical and social realizations. The religious experience does not necessarily express itself in rational doctrines; but Dawson emphasizes that it cannot be, as such, opposed to reason and to a theology for which the supernatural order does not contradict, but fulfills and elevates the natural, reasonable order.

In chapters full of historical, sociological and anthropological insights, Dawson illustrates his fundamental thesis on the unity between culture and religion, or to use another formula, the necessity of a vivifying religious belief for all human, social, and political activities. He shows how prophets, priests and kings—figures who are organs of revelation, of religio-social organization and of divine power—determine social, political and scientific-intellectual developments; to demonstrate this, he uses Islam, Hinduism and Egypt as examples. He uses primitive societies to illustrate how religious beliefs determine basic patterns for social institutions and customs. Without excitement, but therefore with most devastating effects, he proves that utilitarian interpretations of history and social developments—those interpretations which regard religion and religious origins of institutions as expressions of a backwardness and deformation of human consciousness which must be overcome by enlightenment and scientific-psychological progress—do not correspond to reality. Religious experience, won by observation of the external world as well as by insight into one's own soul, cannot be reduced to, and replaced by, scientism and utilitarian-

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ism—even an apparently complete secularism hides religious (that is, of course, unconsciously held pseudo-religious) views on the whole of human existence.

★

DAWSON'S BOOK successfully unites a general interpretation of culture with concrete historical, sociological analysis. While no abstract religion common to all mankind or contained in all existing world religions is construed, it is shown that aspects of human religious experience are realized in the various world religions which arose in history—the cultural importance of an apparently anti-cultural Buddhism is as convincingly demonstrated as the religious basis of the apparently secular-utilitarian Chinese Confucianism. Belief in the unity of the various world religions does not exclude, but, on the contrary, implies a hierarchy of world religions. Dawson manifestly accepts the claim of the Catholic Church to be the bearer of the revelation whose truth is maintained by its authority through the ages.

Obviously, some critical questions can be raised. It must be regretted that the book is so short. Dawson knows infinitely more than he has put down on these pages. He does not deal with the views of Toynbee, Father W. Schmidt, and of Bergson. Chapters on prophecy in the Old Testament and on Gnosticism would have been helpful. Excellent are the remarks on the two dangers of religious influence in a culture; there is the danger of revolutionary disruption and creation of a small exclusive world by prophetic claims against the established order, and there is the danger of the universalization of a particular culture. It would have been useful if Dawson could have expanded these hints by discussing with more details the relations between Christianity and culture, by evaluating, for instance, Maritain's distinctions between the one Church and the various forms of human civilizations rising among Christians.

Somewhat insufficient seem to me the remarks on the present secularized-scientistic culture. Dawson might have analyzed the modern political religions, which appear in a virulent form as bolshevism and totalitarian nationalism and in a more subtle form as the use of religion for maintenance of aesthetic-social traditions; for religion, despite all praise, is regarded by such nationalisms only as a means necessary to maintain themselves.

The use of Goethe's famous remarks on the demonic character for the understanding of kingship seem to me erroneous. Goethe's demonic man is not the organ of divine power, but he is an individual outside the normal order, destroying order, driven by dark irrational forces.

★

BUT I WILL not continue with an analysis and criticism of this significant book. Its importance consists not so much in the details, but in its masterful synthesis, which is of the greatest importance both for the specialist, and the general reader. Christopher Dawson's book ought to be pondered by everyone concerned with Catholic higher education and with the scholarly

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writings of Catholics. The danger of a purely pietistic, apologetic approach in Catholic education and the writings of Catholics has been widely recognized today. Another danger is probably less realized—the danger of a naive acceptance of scientific-critical methods. Catholic colleges and universities try to establish graduate studies which are not different from those in secular institutions (true, attacks on dogmas and moral principles, forbidding, e.g., birth control, divorce, etc., are avoided.) This emphasis on critical and philological exactness, meticulous statistics, etc., is praiseworthy as a reaction against a satisfaction with pietistic-apologetic statements. But this approach threatens to destroy interest in general ideas and particularly an understanding of the religious basis of history and culture.

I hope that the work of Christopher Dawson will exercise a great influence as an antidote against this highly regrettable overestimation of external, though necessary, scholarship, which probably has caused Catholic students —as the Boston heresy case has demonstrated—to look for satisfaction of their general interests outside official Catholic institutions, with effects which one can only deplore.

Dawson's book shows that the Catholic scholar must master all modern methods of analysis and investigation, but that he cannot be satisfied with naive use of them—that is, without intellectual-spiritual interpretation and general ideas. He must try to use the details as illustrating the relations between all aspects of human life and religion. He must regard theology not only in theory, but also in the practice of his research and interpretation, as a guiding science. That obviously does not mean a fideism, a "puritanism" which despises culture; it means an attitude which believes that, e.g., it is necessary to know Hegelian philosophy and utopian socialism in order to understand Marx, but that the interpretation of Marx can be complete only if one applies theological categories, such as eschatologism, if one is to understand the relation between his atheism and his views on the nature of man. Or to give another example: a Christian philosophy of literature helps to understand modern writers, as Michel Carrouge's *La mystique du Surhomme* (Paris, 1948) so brilliantly shows, and therefore it would be a disaster if Catholic schools would replace the teaching of a Christian philosophy of literature by a critical, philological approach. Such an approach is obviously necessary, but not as the one, exclusive approach.

It is the great merit of Christopher Dawson to show that a Christian—theological, though quiet—unapologetic interpretation of culture presents a most impressive picture also for those who would not share Dawson's religious views, whereas they would not be impressed by a purely factual-scientific analysis. Of course Dawson gives such factual analysis too, but he regards it only as a necessary, self-evident means, and not as the highest end of true scholarship.

Books

Goethe. The Story of a Man. Ludwig Lewisohn. Farrar, Straus. $10.00.

"I HAD always before pictured these people whom they called poets as shabby and morally corrupt fellows," confessed a Prussian artillery officer in his diary in August, 1792, during the Allied campaign against the French Revolutionists. "Imagine my surprise when I made the personal acquaintance of Herr Goethe. He was an uncommonly impressive and good-looking man, elegantly attired and in his best years. His demeanour was so distinguished that one would have thought him a prince, rather than a mere commoner and secretary. His assurance was complete and the words flowed so beautifully and skilfully from his lips that the hearer thought he were being read from a printed book. . . ."

This is one of the numerous documents that have preserved the fascination of the man Goethe to our generation. It is impressive to learn about Goethe from his manifold letters and autobiographical writings and from the notes and conversations of his contemporaries. While—strangely enough—the present "Goethe-Year" has not brought forth to date any new biography in English or any fresh aesthetical appreciation, Lewisohn's publication is already the third recent American collection of tatters of text taken from works, letters and memoirs of Goethe and his friends. While the books by Bierman and Curtius concentrate on Goethe's genius and his philosophy of life, Lewisohn collects thousands of little excerpts from various sources in order to give by these multifarious but fragmentary mosaics a rather full account of the poet's life. His collection of quota-

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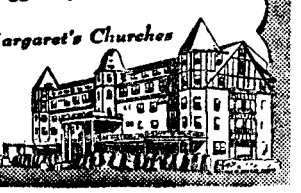

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tions is much larger than that of the two other books together; it includes also some autobiographical verse, while the editor of Curtius' selections pretends that Goethe's poetry "defies translation" and that the English translations of Goethe "make him sound like a third-rate Victorian." As a matter of fact, Lewisohn's translations sound neither Victorian nor third-rate; most of them render the meaning and the beauty of the originals rather fairly. Lewisohn, the translator, has done a thorough job: a great portion of this work has never before appeared in the English language.

Unfortunately, this beautifully planned book starts with an ugly stain. Taking revenge for the ignominious persecutions of Jews staged by the Hitler gang, Lewisohn debunks in the first paragraph of his "Introduction" the whole German people, the nation that brought forth the genius of Goethe. Instead of a serious research into present German civilization, which is eager to restore the world-wide spirit of the "Goethezeit," Lewisohn chides the Germans as "the despair and horror of this hour in history." He claims that the Germans of our day are "devoid of recognizable lineaments, like men robbed of a human countenance."

Such collective accusations are not the utterances of a Goethean mind. Goethe had been in real danger when the Hitler of his time, Napoleon Bonaparte, invaded Germany and when his soldiers came to Weimar, plundering the city. Drunken soldiers threatened the poet. He was only saved "by both courage and good luck." Goethe never repaid his unpleasant situation by debunking the French nation or even the poor discipline of the French troops. His truly cosmopolitan mind was not able to wrong any nation.

"It is clear," Goethe later wrote to Carlyle "that for some time past the efforts of the best poets and creative artists of all nations are directed towards the generally human. . . . A true and general tolerance will be best attained if you grant individuals and nations their specific characteristics and yet cling to the conviction that what is most truly meritorious is distinguished by the fact that it belongs to all humanity."

When Goethe was blamed for not cooperating with the German war of liberation, at least as a poet, he answered: "To write war songs while sitting safely in a room—that could never have been my way of doing. . . . I have never affected the feelings in my poetry. I have never written or expressed anything that was not a burning issue and a trouble in my own heart. I wrote love poems only when I loved. How could I have written songs of hate without hatred? And, between ourselves, I never hated the French although I thanked God when we were rid of them. How could I, to whom the only significant things are culture and barbarism, hate a nation which is among the most cultivated in the world and to which I owe so great a part of my own culture?"

Lewsohn's collection is not a biography, as the subtitle "The Story of a Man" suggests, but only a selection of the biographer's source material. On some questions, Goethe's utterances are rather complete, especially about the Jews. However, Goethe's most interesting remarks about Catholicism are omitted. Explanatory notes by the editor are reduced to a minimum; thus you are undisturbed in listening to the voices of Goethe's time.

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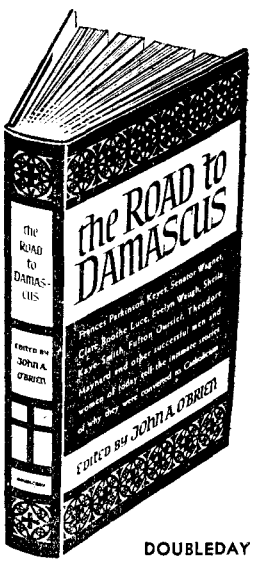

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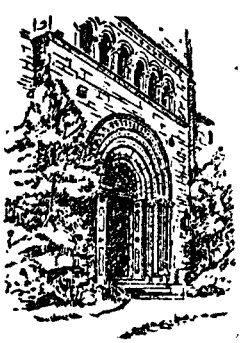

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The Slender Reed. H. H. Lynde. Crown. $3.00.

A MODERN author, bent on depicting the insecurity of the individual, might be expected to choose as protagonist one of the sensational examples which the twentieth century affords—a war casualty, a displaced person or a victim of the depression. H. H. Lynde's latest novel is perhaps of more permanent value because its heroine, relatively isolated from these extraordinary catastrophes and living in luxury and ease, encounters nonetheless the fear and uncertainty which are part of every human experience.

Madge Fairlie possessed in her early forties all the symbols of security—a successful husband, an intelligent and charming daughter and every material comfort. Rather than supplying confidence to the naturally timid Madge, these circumstances tended to engender in her a feeling of inadequacy. Increasingly aware of the lack of love and respect from the strong personalities around her, Madge listlessly accepted the fact that her life lacked a firm foundation.

One by one the artificial props of Madge's unhappy life were removed by the death of her husband and the gradual loss of her fortune. Skilfully the author describes her slow discovery that the security which she believed depended on other people and external circumstances really lay within herself. With a strength which amazes herself, she relinquishes the companionship of her daughter's family, her last shred of security. Leaving the house which has been her home for forty years, she thinks, "Why no, there had never been any real safety there, had there? Shelter yes, and protection of a sort—from the weather say. But you couldn't be protected, in any house, from the things which were already inside it. And this thing called safey—this security they talked so much about—what was it, after all? Was there any such thing in the world? Not against old age, there wasn't. Or against illness. Or war . . . she felt safer than she had in many, many years. Just because she knew there was no safety anywhere, and it was foolish to look for it or to count on it."

The Slender Reed is not merely an unusually perceptive novel of character. It poses some basic questions concerning women in society and human beings in the universe and its solutions are at least partially satisfying.

CATHERINE ANN CLINE.

The Passion of the Infant Christ. Caryll Houselander. Sheed. $1.75.

NO DOUBT it has always been true that we do an injustice to important books by striving to compress their message within a few lines. That Miss Houselander's book is important can scarcely be questioned. I should not like to do it the disservice of summarizing it. But I shall say that it is more than commonly impressive and that it strikes the reader as the sort of thing he has long had need of. Its chief concern is with the Christ Child in our lives—with His birth in our hearts and His growing to maturity.

What it has to say of Him and of our need for Him is said with a soundness of insight which shows its author to be in living contact with the real world in which men dwell. Though it is a small book, you will not want to read it hurriedly. For each sentence will stir a thought and each chapter raise the question whether these pages were not penned with you in mind.

HENRY G. J. BECK.

Dickens. His Character, Comedy and Career. Hesketh Pearson. Harper. $4.00.

THE CHIEF obstacle to a completely satisfying life of Charles Dickens is one of focus. For the man expended boundless nervous energy. The writing of twenty novels and more which would have sufficed many an ambitious author was only one outlet for the voluble Dickens. He diverted his energies in many competing directions: editing a weekly periodical, staging and taking part in countless plays, and finally in giving dramatic readings from his works on platforms in all parts of Britain and the United States. Mr. Pearson believes that this latter activity shortened his life by ten years, especially when toward the end he added to his repertoire an exhausting sequence from *Oliver Twist,* a rendering of the murder of Nancy with all the stops pulled out. Only a genius could have poured himself out so continually and produced much that was abiding, and certain critics have long felt that Dickens wrote so feverishly and so much that he dulled his power to distinguish—that he never realized, for instance, the superiority of the *Tale of Two Cities* over his other works.

Mr. Pearson has had considerable experience in portraying literary figures at some length. This time, aside from a few quiet remarks, he lets the hectic Dickens career tell its own prolix story. The figure which emerges is an appealing if pathetic one. The ready sympathy which often takes the form of sentimentality in the typical Dickens work was not an author's pose. Not only was he interested in everything and everybody he encountered, but he was forever rushing to the aid of people in distress. He was constantly agitating for badly needed social reforms and other good causes. Regardless of his treatment of his wife, as far as humanity in general went he was consistent.

One of the most amusing contrasts in this book is between the two Dickens visits to America, twenty-five years apart. On the first one he was cocky, flamboyant in dress and contemptuous of our modes and manners (a feeling paralleled only by the way he affected the effete of Boston). A quarter-century later he sought assiduously to make amends, even to carrying out his lecture engagements to the letter when he was in a wretched state of health. Dickens lovers will find many other things in this much-detailed account to strengthen their admiration for the author of *David Copperfield.*

E. S. S.

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